INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS for the FAST of LENT in the preſent Year 1797, and for the obſervance of WEDNESDAY the 8th of MARCH, as a Day of particular Humiliation and Prayer within the LONDON DISTRICT.

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Now therefore, ſaith the Lord, be converted to me with all your heart in faſting and in weeping and in mourning. Joel ii. 12.

IF the continuance of the ſcourge of war, with its attendant calamities in bloodſhed, rapine, ſacrilege, &c ought to awaken us to ſeek, by every means in our power, to appeaſe the wrath of our Father in heaven; how ought we to be alarmed, when we ſee the dreadful war extending its devaſtations, laying waſte the faireſt portion of the kingdom of Chriſt, and carrying in its progreſs every horror of ſacrilegious impiety into the Holy Places! *Now therefore ſaith the Lord; be converted to me with all your heart in faſting, and in weeping, and in mourning .... for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who know th but he will return, and forgive, and leave a bleſſing behind him.* Joel, c. ii. vv. 12, 13, 14.

Deſtruction had been denounced upon the city of Nineve: a Prophet had proclaimed in her ſtreets, *yet forty days and Nineve ſhall be deſtroyed. And the men of Nineve believed in God, and they proclaimed a Faſt .... and God ſaw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had ſaid, that he would do to them, and he did it not.* Jonas c. iii. vv. 4, 5, 10.

Mindful of this, and the many other inſtances of mercy which are recorded in the ſacred ſcriptures, We appoint the 8th of March to be obſerved by the Faithful of our Diſtrict, as a day of particular humiliation and prayer: and we charge all our Clergy, who are not lawfully hindered, to offer up on that day, the Holy Sacrifice of the Maſs, namely that which is marked in the Miſſal, *Tempore Belli*, praying the Lord to let his anger ceaſe, to guard his own inheritance, to bleſs the arms of his Majeſty, to cruſh the power of our enemies, and to cover theſe kingdoms with the ſhield of his moſt gracious protection.

On the ſame motives, and to prevent the ſtill more dreadful evils which await impenitent ſinners in the life to come, we moſt earneſtly intreat the Faithful of our Diſtrict, to enter upon, and to keep the approaching Lent, in the true ſpirit of penance. For when we conſider the multitude and enormity of our tranſgreſſions, who does not ſee cauſe to apprehend that the clemency of Heaven may be ſoon exhauſted, and the day be near wherein juſtice is to take place, and the vial of divine wrath to be poured out upon us?

Hence, it is not without real pain that we find ourſelves obliged to relax the ſtrict obſervance of this great Faſt: eſpecially in a year, ſo remarkable for the open ſeaſon, and the temperate weather, we have hitherto experienced. But the advanced price of all kinds of proviſions, which bears ſo hard on the wants of our numerous poor; and the increaſing miſery of our ſuffering brethren from France, who reſide in our Diſtrict, plead ſo forcibly for a relaxation of the law in point of abſtinence, that, willing to alleviate the diſtreſſes of an afflicted people, we have determined after mature deliberation, to grant the following diſpenſations:

1. It is permitted to eat fleſh meat four days in the Week, viz. on Sundays, Mondays, Tueſdays and Thurſdays: on Sundays at dinner and ſupper; but at no other time of the day: on Mondays, Tueſdays and Thurſdays at dinner only: to begin on the Firſt Sunday in Lent, and to end with Thurſday before Palm-Sunday.

2. Eggs are allowed on all days at dinner; excepting Aſh-Wedneſday, the days on which fleſh-meat is allowed, and the four laſt days of Holy Week.

3. Cheeſe may be eaten every day at dinner, excepting Aſh-Wedneſday & Good-Friday.

But to compenſate for the uſe of theſe diſpenſations, we call upon all the Faithful to act up to the ſpirit of the law through the whole of this penitential ſeaſon, by offering daily the ſacrifice of a contrite and humbled heart; by more fervent prayer, more abundant Almſdeeds, and the more punctual obſervance of all the Rules of Lent, which the ſaid diſpenſations leave in full force.

LONDON, FEB. 6, 1797.

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